

88 *Inequalities in Mental Health care and treatment for indigenous people - A Maori Perspective.*

From a Maori perspective there are inequalities in mental health care and treatment in accessing cultural expertise and practice of wellbeing, with a need to recognize cultural psychological and spiritual perspectives working to achieve wellbeing.

Some of these that we have acknowledged are:

- Inequalities of spiritual issues/illness verses scientific evidence based outcomes defining the parallel.
- Diagnosis – giving a wrong or incorrect clinical diagnosis for a spiritual issue/illness.
- Traditional healing – accessibility and safety of cultural practitioners and healing methods giving indigenous people the option or choice of using cultural assessment / .practice along side of conventional medicines, methods and practice.
- Social stigma attached to Maori traditional healing from the lack of awareness and understanding with the need of education on these aspects of health care and treatment.
- The practice of and acceptance of Maori best practice models and assessments to assist, treat and deliver quality health care.
- Quality cultural education to all clinicians, doctors and psychiatrists on an awareness and understanding of Maori terminology and practice, with appropriate Maori models of health care, methodology and practice.

A case study presentation will highlight the methods of which to assess the cause, how to treat the cause not the symptom, identify the cause if linked to spiritual aspects not clinical diagnosed illness and define the source linked to the spiritual / medical (physical or internal) or psychological issues affecting the wellbeing.

Equity for Maori people's mental health care begins with;

- Quality cultural education programmes that deliver to all mental health clinicians an awareness and understanding of Maori psychology perspectives, methods of traditional healing and terminologies parallel to western.
- Recognition from western medical practice to align traditional healing with conventional medicines and methods of practice.
- Acknowledge and implement within western mental health systems Maori best practice models and cultural assessments, to work alongside of conventional medicines and practice aligning cultural terminologies of psychology with western.
- Creating Maori workforce development by delivering training programmes for Maori with expertise in traditional healing methods of practice, to work along side of western clinicians from a psychological perspective to assist mental wellbeing.
- Implement quality policies on safety, access and practice for cultural practitioners to work parallel with western mental health systems to assess, treat, care and assist recovery of mentally unwell Maori within mainstream services.